


1-1-2003

Latinos in Boston, Massachusetts

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Recommended Citation

Jones, Charles, "Latinos in Boston, Massachusetts" (2003). *Gastón Institute Publications*. Paper 76.
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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in Boston | Massachusetts

by Charles Jones, Research Associate

The Mauricio Gastón Institute of the University of Massachusetts Boston conducts research on and for the Latino population. A goal is to generate the kind of information and analysis necessary to develop sound public policy, and to improve Latino participation in the policy making process. In an effort to present vital information about Latinos to diverse audiences, the Gastón Institute has produced a series of basic demographic profiles for the states and selected cities of New England, based on the United States Census 2000.

Census 2000 data include changes in the way people were counted. The most significant change is to allow persons to select more than one race, creating a new multiracial category of “two or more races,” but meaning people may not be included in the race with which they most identify. There was, however, no way to choose more than one ethnicity; one must choose either Latino or not. Throughout this profile, numbers reflect Latinos of all races, or non-Latinos by race, with persons of two or more races counted separately. All categorizations are based solely on self-identification. All of this complicates comparisons between 1990 and 2000 data. However, the concepts are similar enough to make trends and patterns clear.

In Boston, the general population changes from 1990 to 2000 were similar to state and national trends. The population of most people of color — African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Pacific Islanders — grew at a higher rate than did the population of non-Hispanic Whites, which actually shrank (see table 1). The total population of Boston increased by 2.6%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 23,134 or 37.3%, although both Asians and “some other race” had a higher percent increase. Latinos now represent 14.4% of the population, an increase of 3.7 percentage points and the largest gain of any group. Non-Hispanic Whites are no longer the majority of Bostonians. Boston has the largest population of Latinos in Massachusetts and in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in Boston ranks 10th in the state.

Table 1

Boston - Growth by Ethnicity							
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Hispanic or Latino	85,089	14.4	61,955	10.8	23,134	37.3	3.7
White	291,561	49.5	338,734	59.0	-47,173	-13.9	-9.5
Black or African American	140,305	23.8	136,887	23.8	3,418	2.5	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,517	0.3	1,531	0.3	-14	-0.9	0.0
Asian ^a	44,009	7.5	29,640	5.2	14,640	49.4	2.4
Pacific Islander ^a	271	0.0					
Some other race	8,215	1.4	5,536	1.0	2,679	48.4	0.4
Two or more races ^b	18,174	3.1					
Total	589,141		574,283		14,858	2.6	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

Note: Growth figures will not balance due to the new multiracial category.

^a 'Asian and Pacific Islander' was split for the 2000 census. Growth and changes reflect combined total.

^b There was no equivalent category in the 1990 census.

Table 2

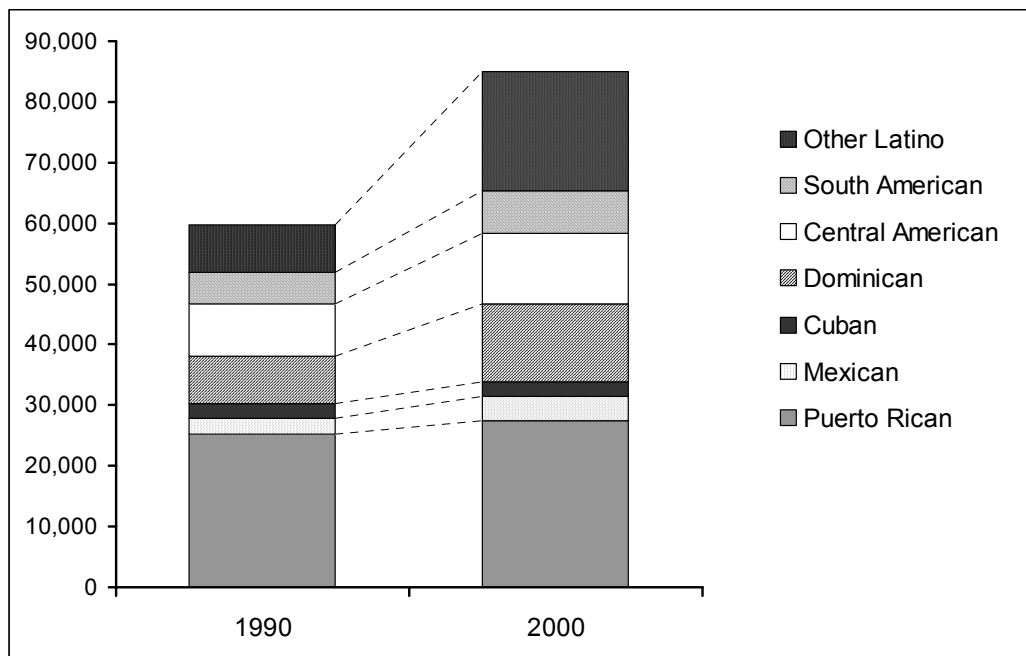
Boston - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	85,089		59,692		25,397	42.5
Mexican	4,126	4.8	2,640	4.4	1,486	56.3
Puerto Rican	27,442	32.3	25,183	42.2	2,259	9.0
Cuban	2,221	2.6	2,366	4.0	-145	-6.1
Dominican Republic	12,981	15.3	7,938	13.3	5,043	63.5
Salvadoran	5,333	6.3	3,178	5.3	2,155	67.8
Other Central American	6,199	7.3	5,378	9.0	821	15.3
Colombian	4,065	4.8	2,374	4.0	1,691	71.2
Other South American	2,939	3.5	2,783	4.7	156	5.6
Other Hispanic or Latino	19,783	23.2	7,852	13.2	11,931	151.9

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(b).

^a 1990 figures for nationality are from sample data only and differ from population counts.¹

Figure 1

Boston - Growth and Change of the Latino Population



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

All Latino national-origin groups grew between 1990¹ and 2000 except Cubans. The largest group in Boston is Puerto Rican, at 32.3%, followed by “Other” Latinos and Dominicans. “Other” Latinos were the fastest-growing population, growing by 152%, a trend seen across the U.S. (see table 2 and figure 1). A person is counted as “Other” if they write in “Spanish” or give an answer that can't be assigned to a particular nationality (such as “Latino”), or if they identify more than one origin, or leave the answer blank. Future scholarly studies may better describe the composition of this category. The detailed breakdown of Central and South Americans is available at the Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder service, online at: factfinder.census.gov.

Table 3

Boston - Households by Tenure							
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	25,772		18,410		7,362	40.0	
Owners	4,073	15.8	2,386	13.0	1,687	70.7	2.8
Renters	21,699	84.2	16,024	87.0	5,675	35.4	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 15.8% versus 84.2%, although there has been a 2.8% increase in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). Still, this is much lower than the state average of 61.7%. Although there has been a small growth in the proportion of non-family households, it is still true that most Latinos, 70%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 21.6% of Latino-headed households, slightly less than the Massachusetts average of 23.3%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 26.2% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 7.5%, and a 1% increase since 1990.

Table 4

Boston - Family Structure						
	2000		1990		Growth	Change
Latino Headed Households	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent	in Percent
Families:	18,200	70.6	12,981	70.5	40.2	0.1
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	5,568	21.6	3,824	20.8	45.6	0.8
Female Head, with children	6,743	26.2	4,669	25.4	44.4	0.8
Male Head, with children	1,004	3.9	700	3.8	43.4	0.1
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	2,472	9.6	2,016	11.0	22.6	-1.4
Single, no children	2,413	9.4	1,772	9.6	36.2	-0.3
Non-Family Household	7,572	29.4	5,429	29.5	39.5	-0.1
Total Households	25,772		18,410		40.0	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

^a Own or related children under 18 only.

Data Sources:

All available at American Fact Finder [online service]: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

U.S. Census Bureau:

2000: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) 100% Data.

1990(a): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) 100% Data.

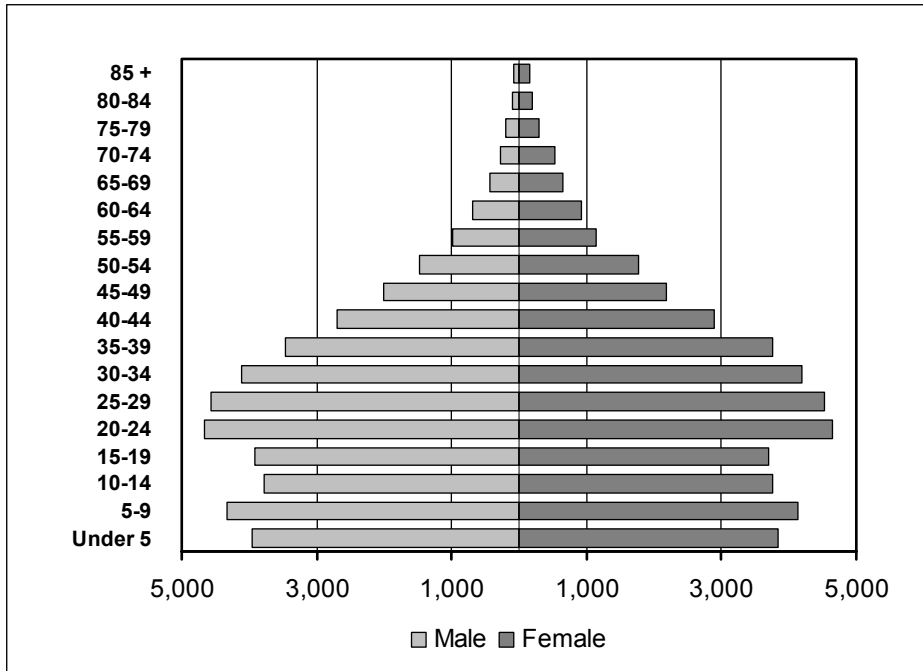
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

1992: 1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics. Washington DC: GPO.

Notes:

¹ Sample data from 1990 is based on the "Long Form" files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or "Short Form" data. For example there is a 4.5% difference in the total number of Latinos in Massachusetts. There are sources of error in any census or survey, however the estimates here are accurate enough to note trends and patterns.

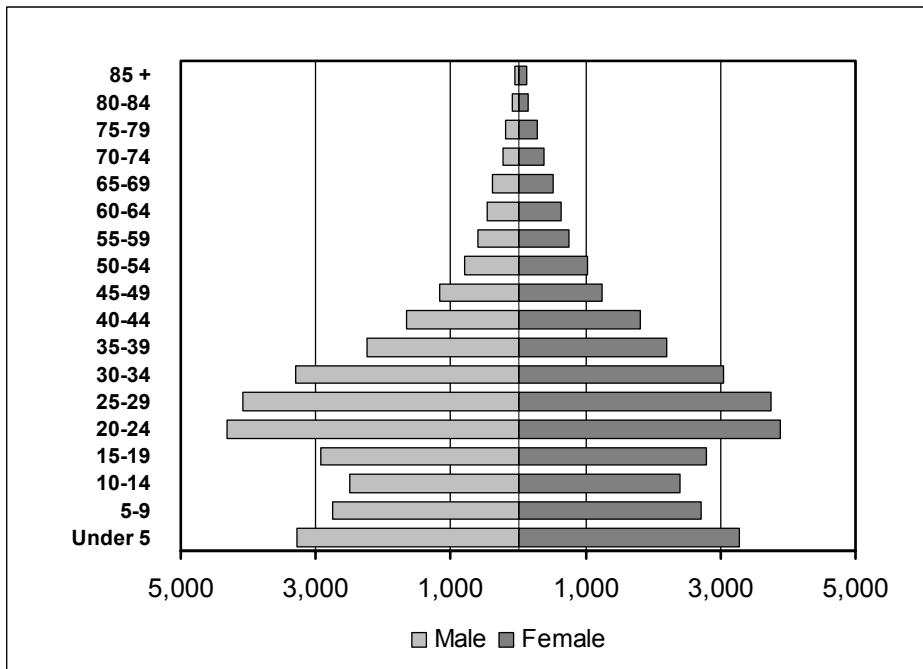
Figure 2
Boston - Age Profile 2000



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Figure 3
Boston - Age Profile 1990

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.



The age composition of Latinos in Boston has changed. There has been an increase among all age groups, but especially among those in the middle years. Even though there are many more children, the overall Latino population is maturing (see figures 2 and 3).

The Latino population in Boston and in the rest of the country remains relatively young. In 2000, 36.9% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly more than the 36.5% in 1990 (see table 5). However, the Latino median age of 25.9 is higher than in 1990, though much younger than the overall Massachusetts median age of 36.5. Women still tend to be older than men, and the gap increased during the 1990s. In addition to becoming relatively older, both Latinos and Latinas became less concentrated in the 20-29 age group (see tables 6 and 7).

Table 5

Boston - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	16,252	19.1	12,013	19.4	35.3
10-19	15,171	17.8	10,601	17.1	43.1
20-29	18,403	21.6	16,036	25.9	14.8
30-39	15,535	18.3	10,785	17.4	44.0
40-49	9,797	11.5	5,870	9.5	66.9
50-59	5,372	6.3	3,165	5.1	69.7
60-69	2,701	3.2	1,987	3.2	35.9
70 and over	1,858	2.2	1,498	2.4	24.0
Total	85,089		61,955		37.3
Median Age	25.9		25.1		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Table 6

Boston - Latino Males by Age				
	2000		1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 10 years	8,277	19.8	6,021	19.4
10-19	7,711	18.5	5,416	17.5
20-29	9,229	22.1	8,404	27.1
30-39	7,578	18.1	5,531	17.9
40-49	4,715	11.3	2,808	9.1
50-59	2,459	5.9	1,397	4.5
60-69	1,129	2.7	836	2.7
70 and over	667	1.6	555	1.8
Total	41,765		30,968	
Median Age	25.2		24.7	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Table 7

Boston - Latina Females by Age				
	2000		1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 10 years	7,975	18.4	5,992	19.3
10-19	7,460	17.2	5,185	16.7
20-29	9,174	21.2	7,632	24.6
30-39	7,957	18.4	5,254	17.0
40-49	5,082	11.7	3,062	9.9
50-59	2,913	6.7	1,768	5.7
60-69	1,572	3.6	1,151	3.7
70 and over	1,191	2.7	943	3.0
Total	43,324		30,987	
Median Age	26.7		25.5	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.